

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ARA-06 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01
INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02
SS-15 TRSE-00 NSCE-00 SSO-00 USIE-00 INRE-00 /058 W
-----230643Z 049967 /21/40/45

O R 211700Z MAR 77
FM AMEMBASSY PARIS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 841
INFO AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY ROME
USCINCEUR
AMCONSUL MARTINIQUE
AMCONSUL BORDEAUX
AMCONSUL LYON
AMCONSUL MARSEILLE
AMCONSUL NICE
AMCONSUL STRASBOURG

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C O R R E C T E D C O P Y

EUR FOR AMBASSADOR RUSH
CINCEUR FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, FR
SUBJECT: PARIS ELECTIONS: RESULTS OF SECOND ROUND

REF: PARIS 7425

SUMMARY. RPR PRESIDENT JACQUES CHIRAC TOOK THE MAXI-
MUM EXPECTED IN THE PARIS VOTE AND WILL UNDOUBTEDLY BE
ELECTED MAYOR OF PARIS. SECOND ROUND VOTING IN PARIS
CONFIRMED THE OVERALL ADVANCE OF THE LEFT THROUGHOUT
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FRANCE, THOUGH TO A LESSER EXTENT. IN CLOSE RACES IN
THE SECOND AND SIXTEENTH SECTORS, IR SECRETARY GENERAL
JACQUES DOMINATI AND MINISTER OF INDUSTRY MICHEL
D'ORNANO (IR) BOTH LOST TO THE LEFT. OTHERWISE THOSE
SECTORS WHICH THE LEFT ENTERTAINED HOPES OF CAPTURING
REMAINED IN THE MAJORITY. CHIRAC'S POWER BASE AND
PRESTIGE WITHIN THE GOVERNMENT COALITION FIND THEM-

SELVES CONFIRMED BUT PRESIDENT GISCARD D'ESTAING AND HIS ELECTORAL STRATEGIST MICHEL PONIATOWSKI SUFFER ONE MORE BLOW. ORONICALLY, WHEREAS SOME OBSERVERS WERE ALREADY ANALYZING THE INEVITABLE PROBLEMS THAT WOULD CROP UP BETWEEN AN OPPOSITION TOWN HALL AND THE CURRENT GOVERNMENT MAJORITY, IN THE OPINION OF SOME A COMPLETELY REVERSE SITUATION COULD PRESENT ITSELF WERE THE UNITED LEFT TO WIN THE 1978 LEGISLATIVE ELECTIONS. END SUMMARY.

1. THE RPR: THE RPR TOOK ALL OF THE SECTORS IT WAS EXPECTING TO WIN AND THEREBY CAPTURED THE MAXIMUM NUMBER OF SEATS (52) PREDICTED IN PARA ONE REFTTEL. THE NUMBER OF GAULLIST SEATS ON THE MUNICIPAL COUNCIL, BY MOVING FROM 37 OF 90 TO 52 OUT OF 109, COMFORTABLY INCREASES RPR PERCENTAGE AT TOWN HALL AND WE CAN EXPECT THE GAULLISTS TO RUN THE CITY EVEN MORE TIGHTLY THAN DURING THE LAST 20 YEARS. THE COUNCILLORS WILL ELECT THEIR MAYOR LATER THIS WEEK, AND THERE IS NO DOUBT THAT CHIRAC WILL WIN. HE WILL OF COURSE BE HELPED BY SUCH COUNCILLORS AS CLAUDE MARCUS AND CHRISTIAN DE LA MALENE, WHOSE TENUOUS POSITIONS WERE ARDENTLY SUPPORTED BY CHIRAC DURING THE CAMPAIGN AND WHO WILL BE ESPECIALLY GRATEFUL TO HIM FOR THEIR CLOSE-CALL VICTORIES.

2. THE INDEPENDENT REPUBLICANS: MICHEL D'ORNANO HAS NEVER HAD IT SO BAD. HE GAVE UP HIS ASSEMBLY SEAT TO BECOME A MINISTER, HE GAVE UP THE TOWN HALL OF DEAUUVILLE TO RUN IN PARIS; IF GISCARD SACKS HIM (WHICH IS CONFIDENTIAL

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FAR FROM SSURE), THE BEST HE CAN HOPE FOR AT THIS POINT, ACCORDING TO ONE RUMOR, IS TO BE FRANCH AMBASSADOR TO WASHINGTON. ADDED TO THIS IS THE DEFEAT OF IR SECRETARY GENERAL JACQUES DOMINATI IN THE SECOND SECTOR, AS WELL AS D'ORNANO'S RUNNING MATE, IR ASSEMBLY GROUP PRESIDENT ROGER CHINAUD. (IT WILL BE REMEMEBERED THAT DOMINATI WAS THE FIRST TO PROMOTE THE PARIS REFORM INSTITUTING THE OFFICE OF MAYOR AND THAT DOMINATI HIMSELF ENTERTAINED HIGH HOPES OF ACQUIRING THE POST). TOTAL SEATS ON THE MUNICIPAL COUNCIL FOR THE INDEPENDENT REPUBLICANS MOVE FROM 10 TO 12; BUT IN VIEW OF THE OVERALL INCREASE OF THE NUMBER OF COUNCILLORS, THIS TRANSLATES INTO STAGNATION FOR THE PRESIDENT'S PARTY. WITHIN THE MAJORITY THE CAMPAIGN WAS SO BITTER AND THE LONGSTANDING RIVALRY BETWEEN IR/CENTRISTS AND THE GAULLISTS SO PRONOUNCED THAT WOUNDS WILL LIKELY REMAIN OPEN LONG FOR SOME TIME.

3. THE CENTRISTS: THE TOTAL NUMBER OF CENTRIST SEATS

ON THE MUNICIPAL COUNCIL DROPPED FROM 10 TO 5 (ALL OF WHOM WERE CDS AS OPPOSED TO RADICAL SOCIALISTS) CONFIRMING THEIR NATIONWIDE POOR SHOWING. THEIR SETBACK IN PARIS, ADDED TO THE WOES OF SUCH LOSERS AS MINISTERS MICHEL DURAFOUR IN SAINT-ETIENNE AND PIERRE BROUSSE IN BEZIERS, CONFIRMS THE OPINION OF THOSE OBSERVERS WHO SEE CENTRIST POWER AS DISAPPEARING IN THE FRENCH POLITICAL SCENE DUE TO SHARPENED BIPOLARIZATION OF THE ELECTORATE. ONE RELATIVELY CERTAIN FALLOUT OF CENTRIST LOSSES IN PARIS AND ELSEWHERE WILL BE THE PRESSURE ON GISCARD TO REDUCE DISPROPORTIONATE CENTRIST REPRESENTATION IN THE CURRENT CABINET.

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4. SOCIALIST PARTY: THE PS HELD ONLY 8 SEATS ON THE OUTGOING MUNICIPAL COUNCIL. THEY NOW HOLD 14 AND ARE CALL-

ING THEIR SHOW IN PARIS AS MUCH A VICTORY AS THOSE GAINED ELSEWHERE IN FRANCE. BUT THILE THE VICTORY OF THEIR CANDIDATE GEORGES DAYAN IN THE SECOND SECTOR OVER JACQUES DOMINATI IS GOOD NEWS TO THEM THIS MUST BE TAKEN IN CONTEXT WITH PRE-ELECTION UNION OF THE LEFT HOPES FOR WINNING AT LEAST TWO OR THREE OTHER SECTORS IN PARIS FROM THE MAJORITY. OTHERWISE THE PS IS ON RELATIVELY FIRM

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GROUND IN CALLING THE RESULTS OF ITS CANDIDATES IN PARIS A VICTORY INsofar AS THE PARIS POPULATION FLUX IN RECENT YEARS HAS WORKED AGAINST THE UNITED LEFT.

5. THE PCF: THE FRENCH COMMUNIST PARTY INCREASED THE NUMBER OF ITS SEATS FROM 20 TO 22. THUS THE PARIS PCF MAY BE SAID TO HAVE STAGNATED IN THIS ELECTION TO THE BENEFIT OF ITS COMMON PROGRAM PARTNERS. IN ONE SENSE THE PARTY CAN BE PARTICULARLY PROUD OF HAVING HELD ON TO THE 16TH SECTOR IN SPITE OF PERHAPS OVERLY OPTIMISTIC MAJORITY PREDICTIONS THAT D'ORNANO WOULD CARRY THE DAY. IN EFFECT, HOWEVER, THE PERCENTAGE FROP IN PCF STRENGTH ON THE MUNICIPAL COUNCIL (COMPARED TO THE PS) COULD RESULT EVENTUALLY IN SOMEWHAT MORE STRAINED RELATIONS BETWEEN PS AND PCF MEMBERS.

6. CONCLUSION: THE DIVERSE LEFT, THAT IS TO SAY, THE LEFT RADICALS AND THE FRONT PROGRESSISTE, WHO ARE OPPOSITION GAULLISTS, BROUGHT FOUR SEATS TO THE UNION OF THE LEFT. OVERALL OPPOSITION STRENGTH IN PARIS ON THE MUNICIPAL COUNCIL HAS INCREASED 4 PERCENTAGE POINTS TO 37 PERCENT; BUT THE OVERALL STRENGTH OF THE MAJORITY IS STILL SUCH -- WITH 69 SEATS OUT OF 109, -- THAT MAJORITY POLICY WILL PASS EFFORTLESSLY ON FUTURE VOTES. THE GAULLISTS WILL RUN PARIS AND THE IR WILL CONTINUE TO PLAY SECOND FIDDLE TO ITS POWERFUL MAJORITY PARTNER. COMBINED WITH A NATIONWIDE SETBACK FOR THE MAJORITY, THE RESULTS OF THE PARIS ELECTION COULD CONCEIVABLY PUT INTO QUESTION INTERIOR MINISTER PONIATOWSKI'S CONTINUING IN GOVERNMENT, AS WELL AS THE OVERALL CAPACITY OF GISCARDIANS TO RESIST RPR POLICY IN THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY. CHIRAC IS CLAIMING THAT THANKS TO HIS AGGRESSIVE CAMPAIGNING IN PARIS HE PREVENTED THE LEFT FROM WINNING, BUT IS HARD TO DETERMINE WHETHER OR NOT THIS IS TRUE. AT FIRST GLANCE ECOLOGISTS AND JOBERTISTS SEEM TO HAVE MOVED LEFT, BUT THIS CANNOT BE CONFIRMED UNTIL FINAL

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FIGURES ARE IN. AS THE PRESIDENT IS SO CLOSELY IDENTIFIED WITH THE INDEPENDENT REPUBLICANS AND THE CENTRISTS, HOWEVER, HE IS UNABLE NOW TO FALL BACK ON THE VOCTORY OF HIS OWN SUPPORTERS IN THE CAPITAL CITY AND CAN LOOK FORWARD ONLY TO INCREASED TENSION. THIS IS TRUE NOT ONLY BECAUSE OF THE GROWING POWER OF THE LEFT, BUT ALSO BECAUSE OF THE POWERFUL POLITICAL MACHINE OF JACQUES CHIRAC AND THE BOYS IN THE TOUR MONTPARNASSE, WHO LOOK UPON THE PRESIDENT WITH A COMBINATION OF SUSPICION FOR HIS TOUTED OPENING TO THE CENTER-LEFT AND FOR THE IN-EFFECTIVENESS OF HIS TACTICS AND POLICIES.
GAMMON

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: ELECTION RESULTS, NATIONAL ELECTIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 21-Mar-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977PARIS08239
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770096-0730
Format: TEL
From: PARIS
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19770339/aaaabhok.tel
Line Count: 237
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: eba9d4b4-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 5
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 77 PARIS 7425
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 25-Feb-2005 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3046220
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: PARIS ELECTIONS: RESULTS OF SECOND ROUND
TAGS: PINT, FR
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbs://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/eba9d4b4-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009